

HL 2.1992-422

C.2.

CHANGING COURSE MIDSTREAM



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

<https://archive.org/details/changingcoursemi00albe>

CHANGING COURSE MIDSTREAM

CANADIANA

A workbook on change and transitions


SEP - 1 1992

Changing Course Midstream is published by the
Information Development and Marketing Branch
of Alberta Career Development and Employment

For additional copies, please contact:

Learning Resources
Distributing Centre
12360 - 142 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5L 4X9
Telephone: (403) 427-2767


ISBN 07732-00126

Printed on Recycled Paper 

© 1992 Alberta Career Development and Employment

08/92 30M

Alberta
CAREER DEVELOPMENT
AND EMPLOYMENT



**APPROACHING THE FUTURE IS LIKE PADDLING
A CANOE DOWN A RIVER. THERE'S
WHITEWATER AHEAD, UNCERTAINTY AROUND
THE NEXT BEND AND NO TURNING BACK.
RATHER THAN CLINGING TO THE SHORE OR
BACKPADDLING FURIOUSLY, THE CANOEIST
MUST GO WITH THE FLOW, READING THE
WATER AHEAD AND RESPONDING WITH A
SKILLED PADDLE. — RUBEN NELSON, FUTURIST**

Change and uncertainty are everywhere these days and every change involves a transition. This book is about CAREER TRANSITIONS: changes you make in your work and family life. A transition is the process people go through when they make a change.

If you are faced with transitions in your life and learning to make changes in ways that are satisfying and successful, we hope this workbook will help guide you through the choppy water.

This workbook combines information and worksheets to help you learn about:

- types of career transitions,
- the stages people go through in making a transition,
- the skills, strategies and support for making transitions.

You will learn how to:

- benefit from your past experiences,
- identify your strengths and resources,
- develop ways for making transitions work for you, and
- plan for and benefit from future changes.

CHANGING COURSE MIDSTREAM

Page

Introduction: The Situation (The Water)

I

Types of transitions

2

Stages of a transition

4

Real-life examples

5

Part One: Your Self (The Paddler)

9

Taking control — personal power

9

Overcoming fears

11

Re-framing: From self-defeating to powerful thoughts

13

Part Two: Your Support (The Crew)

17

A team approach

17

Getting support

18

Getting information

20

Part Three: Your Strategies (The Paddling)

21

Taking stock

21

Assessing lifestyle needs

25

Risk-taking

27

Decision-making

30

Part Four: Your Action Plan (The Map)

33

Developing a plan

33

Recovering from a mistake

36

Part Five: The Next Time Around (Future Expeditions)

37

**YOU CAN'T STEP INTO THE SAME RIVER TWICE,
FOR OTHER WATERS ARE EVER FLOWING ON.**

— HERACLITUS

INTRODUCTION: THE SITUATION (THE WATER)

Life is a river that is constantly changing. You are changing too. These days change is impossible to avoid. You must adapt to new situations everywhere. Just when you think your life is settled, your job duties change, you get a new boss or you get laid off. You move to a new neighbourhood and it takes you a while to make new friends. You learn how to use an automated teller at the bank and then the bank installs a new kind of machine. You get used to telephone answering machines and then you have to learn how to use a fax. Think of how many changes, large and small, that you have already adjusted to in your life!

Every change involves a transition. This book is about career transitions: changes you make in your work and family life. A transition is the process people go through when they make a change. It is usually triggered by an event or a decision. For example, you make a transition between ending one job and beginning another. You could say you go through two changes, leaving the old job and starting the new one. The transition covers that whole period.

The ease with which you go through a transition depends on many factors. Past experience and practice play a part in your ability to manage a transition. This book identifies some of those factors and can help you define their importance in your own career transition. There are predictable stages to transitions, but the time you spend in one stage or another will vary.

Changes and the transitions involved in dealing with them don't just happen one at a time. You may go through several transitions at once and be in different stages with each. For example, if you go back to school and move to a new neighbourhood about the same time, you will go through two different transitions. One will likely last longer than the other. If you celebrate your fortieth birthday on top of that, you may also experience the transition of becoming middle-aged. A change in a relationship or in your health will also trigger a transition.

TYPES OF TRANSITIONS

We all go through many transitions in our lives: when we leave school, start a new job, change jobs, get married, have children, or end a relationship. Even deciding not to do something can bring about a transition, for example: turning down a job offer or promotion, deciding not to have children.

Transitions fall into two groups: voluntary and involuntary.

VOLUNTARY TRANSITIONS are ones that you choose to make yourself, such as:

- quitting a job,
- accepting a promotion,
- taking early retirement or semi-retirement,
- starting your own business.

INVOLUNTARY TRANSITIONS, ones that are beyond your control, can be transitions such as:

- a change in your health,
- a change in a relationship due to a death, divorce or departure,
- being laid-off or fired,
- being relocated,
- a decrease in the demand for your skills, or
- forced retirement.

Some transitions can be voluntary OR involuntary depending on the situation and how you view it:

- going back to school,
- re-entering the workforce,
- learning new skills.

You may be obliged to learn new technical skills to avoid losing your job. You may decide to go back to school or to work because of your financial situation. Such transitions may not exactly be voluntary, if you do not feel you had a choice in the matter.

**SOMEDAY CHANGE WILL BE ACCEPTED
AS LIFE ITSELF. — SHIRLEY MACLAINE**

Your Situation

What transitions have you made?

Everyone experiences transitions in their lives. What changes in your life have resulted in transitions?

You may want to read over the different kinds of transitions on the previous page. Perhaps you have experienced other transitions you want to add to the list.

The Past

List THREE transitions you have made in your life.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Were they voluntary or involuntary?

The Present

It is not unusual for a person to go through several transitions at once. What transition or transitions are you going through now? If you are in the middle of more than one transition now, you may want to pick only one and write it down.

My transition(s) is/are:

Voluntary or involuntary?

**THE HUMAN MIND, ONCE STRETCHED TO A
NEW IDEA, NEVER GOES BACK TO ITS
ORIGINAL DIMENSION. — OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES**

STAGES OF A TRANSITION

Transitions involve three stages which generate many different feelings. These can range from denial, anger, and depression, to hope and acceptance. Even if your change is voluntary, you will probably feel some sense of loss and need to "say goodbye."

STAGE ONE in a transition is actually an ending, when you realize all the things you are leaving behind by moving on.

Next comes STAGE TWO, a neutral zone, between endings and beginnings. It can be a positive time to think about your past and reflect on the future and what you want it to be.

STAGE THREE is the new beginning, which can be both exciting and scary. There will always be times when you wonder if you were wrong to make the choices you did.

Sometimes you move quickly from endings to new beginnings with little time between. You may still need to take some time to evaluate your experience and think about future plans.

You may think you are finished with a stage and then find yourself going back to it again. The experience of going through the stages will be different for each individual.

Stage One: ENDING

This is a time for: acknowledging the change
recognizing what you will lose or miss
letting go of the past

You may feel: *shock*
denial
excitement
sadness
worry
self-doubt

Stage Two: NEUTRAL ZONE

This is an in-between time for: thinking about the past and the future
taking stock of your strengths and weaknesses
beginning to accept the change
building up strength

You may be: *confused*
unfocused
analytical
reflective
experimental
exploratory
searching for answers

Stage Three: NEW BEGINNING

This is a time for: moving forward
 starting again
 trying new things
 taking risks
 taking things step by step

You may feel: *positive*
 happy
 uncertain
 afraid
 satisfied
 excited
 anxious

Many people experience physical symptoms when they are going through a change. Some of these are: constant tiredness
 weight loss or gain
 insomnia
 indigestion
 rapid breathing, panic attacks

When there is so much uncertainty, people may also smoke or drink alcohol more.

What stage are you at?

Refer back to the present transition(s) you wrote down. Can you identify what stage you are at? Do you recognize some of the feelings associated with each stage?

Make a note of them below:

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLES

You are not alone in going through transitions. When you read these “snapshots” of seven people and how they managed their transitions, you may recognize some of your own experiences. They have each identified a key skill or strategy they used to help themselves.

Snapshot #1 — Planning

Gloria worked as an administrator for the same not-for-profit organization for 12 years. When her husband's company closed down its operations in that city, the company relocated them.

Gloria had to give up her job, her studies and her friends to adjust to life in a new city. She spent the first few months helping her family get settled. Gradually she began to see that the change could benefit her. She decided to take advantage of being unemployed to complete her studies and get a diploma.

Snapshot #2 — Taking Stock

Ben thinks he is still in the middle of a transition. He was laid off from his company two years ago. At the time it seemed a good opportunity to make a career change. He had already made one earlier when he went from being a teacher to working in marketing.

Ben calls his old jobs “head work.” He felt he needed a complete change and so decided to try working more with his hands. He took what he calls a “dry run” by doing renovations on his own home. Then he began a renovations business.

Ben likes the work, but he misses the social contacts of his old job and thinks that perhaps he doesn't have the business skills to succeed as an entrepreneur. Right now Ben is again taking stock of himself and his skills and is thinking that he needs a combination of “head, hands and heart” work, such as part-time teaching and part-time renovating.

Snapshot #3 — Support

Marie is a homemaker with two children in school and one who will be in kindergarten next year. As her children got older, she began to think about re-entering the workforce.

Last year Sam, Marie's husband, lost his job and they decided Marie would have to look for a job too. At first it was hard for Marie to accept the idea of beginning her job search. She was angry at her husband for putting pressure on her.

To build up her courage and her skills, Marie took a career planning course and did some research. She met other people in situations like hers. It has taken a while but now Marie is back working as a drafts person. Sam continues to look for work. At the same time he is reassessing his career and spending time with the children. Marie and Sam have had to change their lifestyle to cut down on costs but they feel there are lots of advantages to the way they are doing things right now.

Snapshot #4 — Decision-Making

George worked as an administrative clerk until he reached the age of 55. He was tired of his job and couldn't imagine staying in it for another 10 years. He decided to take early retirement to spend more time on his hobbies and home repairs.

Just for fun, George took a pottery course. He seemed to have a talent for it. Before long, George's friends began buying his pottery.

At first his goal was just to make "pocket money" but he was encouraged enough to try marketing his pottery. Now he sells through a craft co-op. George enjoys what he is doing a lot, but the best part of his work is the appreciation he gets from his customers.

Snapshot #5 — Positive Attitude

Adele has worked for the same employer since 1982. She worked in one department as a dispatcher until there were some cutbacks. She said she saw "the writing on the wall" when her boss gave her a box of chocolates for Christmas. He had never done anything like that before. A few days later he told her that her job was being eliminated. She was offered "redeployment" to a different department.

Adele felt she did not have any choice. If she didn't accept redeployment, she would become unemployed and she needed the income. Adele didn't really like her new job and applied for any job openings that came up in her old department. She finally got an entry-level position back in that department. Although it was a lower paying job than she was qualified to do, she saw it as an opportunity to get back to an area she liked.

Once she was there, she began applying on internal job competitions. After one year Adele's persistence paid off when she landed a good job that used her skills.

Snapshot #6 — Refocusing

Leo put all his time and energy into being a psychologist. He took extra clients after regular work hours. He hardly ever had time to take holidays or relax. Last winter when a friend came from out of town, Leo was persuaded to go skiing. He had not skied for years. One thing lead to another and Leo ended up in hospital with a serious back injury. It gave him time to think about his priorities and realize that he needed to cut down on work and create more balance in his life. For a while Leo considered a career change, then he decided he did not need to make a career change, just a shift in emphasis. He could afford to work less and spend more time on leisure activities.

Snapshot #7 — Reassessing

Tony worked in an electronic assembly plant until he was laid off last year. He was proud of the high-tech work his company did and was happy to be earning good wages. Tony had never imagined he would be unemployed. He got very discouraged looking for another job and his unemployment insurance was barely enough for him to keep up his payments. The few job opportunities that came along did not seem worth taking because they paid so much less than Tony had been making. In fact they hardly paid any more than U.I. After six months of

looking, Tony has begun to realize that times have changed and that perhaps he has to take a job at less pay, just to be working and using his skills. He might even consider going back to school if he can find the right course and get some financial assistance.

As you saw in the real-life examples, there are a number of skills and strategies that can help you make a successful transition. This book groups them in four parts.

Part One: Your Self (The Paddler)

You are the paddler trying to navigate the turbulent waters. Your approach to the challenge will determine how successful the transition is. It is important for you to take charge and have a positive attitude.

Part Two: Your Support (The Crew)

You need a crew to help you by providing support. You may have to work on developing that crew of people and getting information on other resources.

Part Three: Your Strategies (The Paddling)

Your paddling skills need to be strong. Your strategies for successful navigating begin with building up your strengths by taking stock, assessing your lifestyle needs, identifying your approaches to risk-taking and decision-making.

Part Four: Your Action Plan (The Map)

You need a map or action plan to help you navigate. Developing that plan is important so that you do not lose sight of your destination or goal. Even if your plan does not work, if you do not have enough information, or if you make a mistake, the experience can still be useful to you in handling future changes. Keep in mind that you are always developing skills for future paddling.

Part Five: The Next Time Around (Future Expeditions)

Everything you learn from one experience or change will help you with the next. You increase your ability to handle change and learn how to prepare for the future changes that lie ahead.

THE FUTURE IS NOT SOME PLACE WE ARE
GOING TO, BUT ONE WE ARE CREATING. THE
PATHS ARE NOT TO BE FOUND, BUT MADE,
AND THE ACTIVITY OF MAKING THEM
CHANGES BOTH THE MAKER AND THE
DESTINATION. — JOHN SCHNARR

PART ONE: YOUR SELF (THE PADDLER)

You are the most important part of the transition. Your past experiences and whether you consider changes to be positive or negative play an important part in the transition process. As the paddler who will navigate the changing waters you need to be in charge. This part of the book will cover three techniques to help you do this:

- Taking control
- Overcoming fears
- Re-framing

TAKING CONTROL — PERSONAL POWER

Even when the transition is one you have chosen, you are likely to feel out of control at times. Your one decision or action has set other changes in motion. For example, you hand in your resignation and before you have really accepted the fact that you will no longer be working at that job, the company is already advertising for your replacement. Things start moving a little faster than you would like.

If your transition is involuntary, you will feel you have lost control over a large part of your life. A decision is made about your future plans without your involvement. The timing is not what you would have chosen. You are likely to feel a whole range of feelings such helplessness, rejection and anger. You may even feel relief if, for example, you had heard rumours about lay-offs or suspected something was going to happen.

Among the losses you will experience are loss of:

income	responsibility
routine	friends and colleagues
status	future plans
confidence	

Who is in control here anyway?

Do you feel like you have almost no control over what happens in your life? Perhaps you feel you do not really have choices and so you take little initiative. You tend to REACT to people and situations.

If you do this you can easily become a victim. If things do not work out to your liking, you can always blame others. You do not need to take responsibility for what happens to you. You are tossed around like a leaf in a breeze.

OR

Do you feel that you have some control in your life? You make decisions and plans for yourself. You can work on the direction your life will take. You know there is no point in blaming yourself for things over which you have no control. Sometimes decisions are taken out of your hands. For instance, if you have an accident or become seriously ill or get laid off. You try to find solutions to your problems. You are not a victim, but a survivor.

How much control do you have?

Think of a transition you are going through.

Think about what is really over for you and what your losses are. Then look at the three columns below. In the third column write down some things about the transition that you *cannot* control. (For example, you cannot control the fact that you got laid off, that the unemployment rate is high, that you are getting older, that your health limits the work you can do.)

Write down in the first column some things about the transition that you *can* control. (For example, you can control your attitude, your job search efforts, your networking, your leisure activities.)

Are there some things that you have *some* control over but not complete control? Put them in the middle column.

Can Control	Can Control Somewhat	Cannot Control

Part of the Ending (or Letting Go) stage of a transition is identifying the things that you have no control over. There is little point in spending time and energy wishing that something, over which you had no control, hadn't happened. You need to focus your energies on the things that you can control, such as your attitude, beliefs and skills and work on making them strong and positive.

**LIFE AS A SPECTATOR SPORT IS A FAR RISKIER
STRATEGY THAN GETTING YOUR HANDS ON
THE CONTROLS AND SEEING WHERE YOU
CAN TAKE YOURSELF. — JACK FALVEY,**
WHAT'S NEXT: CAREER STRATEGIES AFTER 35

**NOTHING IN LIFE IS TO BE FEARED — IT IS
ONLY TO BE UNDERSTOOD — MADAME CURIE**

OVERCOMING FEARS

One of the major obstacles to change is fear.

Going through a transition you are likely to feel several kinds of fear:

- fear of failure
- fear of success
- fear of the unknown
- fear of embarrassment
- fear of looking bad / disapproval
- fear of rejection
- fear of trying (could lead to failure and rejection)
- fear of taking risks

What are you afraid of? _____

What is your greatest fear about the transition you are going through? _____

I am afraid that I _____

I am afraid other people will _____

What did you do in the past when you were afraid? _____

What strategies or techniques did you use to overcome your fears?

(Examples: getting more information, taking a small step first, consulting other people, visualizing, talking to yourself etc.) _____

HOW WE FEEL ABOUT CHANGE, IN WHATEVER
FORM, HELPS TO ILLUSTRATE AND DEFINE
HOW WE SEE OURSELVES. — SONYA FRIEDMAN,
SMART COOKIES DON'T CRUMBLE

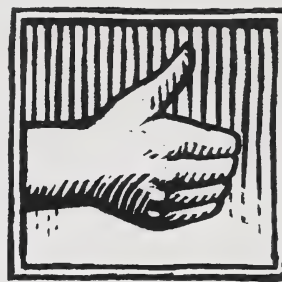
WHAT THE CATERPILLAR CALLS THE END OF
THE WORLD, THE MASTER CALLS A BUTTERFLY.
— RICHARD BACH, ILLUSIONS

RE-FRAMING: FROM SELF-DEFEATING TO POWERFUL THOUGHTS

Re-framing means putting a different frame around a thought or statement. For example you can say to yourself "I'm a failure." Or you can reframe that thought and say more specifically, "The plan failed, not me." or "I made a mistake on the plan." Re-framing your picture of yourself can change your attitude.



I'm a failure



The plan failed, not me

When we put ourselves down, it is called negative self-talk or self-defeating comments, commonly known as put-downs. Self-defeating comments, or put-downs can make you feel worthless and discouraged. They can lead to depression, guilt, anger and worry. You don't like others putting you down, so why let yourself get away with it?

Powerful, positive thoughts and statements lead to action, hope, looking at the future in a positive way.

Some common self-defeating comments are:

- I'm too old to change.
- You can't teach an old dog new tricks.
- It's too late for me to . . .
- I make bad decisions / choices.
- I'm all alone in this.
- I should never have taken that job / taken that course / got that diploma
- I'm no good at anything.
- I wasn't meant to . . . (a way of minimizing your own control and effort)
- I'll never be able to make it as a . . .
- I don't have the time.
- I'm never lucky.
- I can't . . .
- Why bother? There's no hope for me.
- What's the use?

Creating your Own Luck, Changing your Beliefs

You know how the frame around a picture can change its look completely. A picture (or an event) cannot be changed, but you can change the way you look at it. The re-framing helps you to look at a situation differently. A drab picture of hopelessness, helplessness and despair in a new frame can create a picture of hope, challenge, learning and opportunity.

Can you think of a time when an event that happened to you first seemed like a negative experience, and then later you were able to see it as an opportunity? The event didn't change, but your point of view did.

For example: "I'm too old to go back to school."

A self-defeating comment or put-down like this can make you feel helpless and hopeless. It's important to catch yourself making such a statement. Try stopping long enough to ask yourself a few questions.

How much do you really know about adults returning to school?

Who do you know that has gone back to school?

Are you thinking about your age or is it your attitude about yourself?

Are you remembering what it was like when you were last in school?

Do you know what it is like to be an adult student?

Before you accept that statement (such as, "I'm too old to go back to school"), maybe you need to get more factual information to do a reality check. Talk to another adult who has returned to school. Think about how you have learned to do something as an adult.

It is a good idea to take time to question some of your own self-defeating statements. With each one ask yourself: What evidence is there? Is it really true? How true? Can I check it out and get more information?

Tips for re-framing

1. Self-talk — Practise saying positive things about yourself. Repeat them to yourself. Write them down.
2. Take responsibility and create powerful beliefs — Identify what you can do, not what isn't possible.
3. Make a mental video of yourself being confident and successful, getting what you want. Replay it frequently in your mind.
4. Talk to other people who have a positive outlook. Ask them what they think your strengths are. Get them to help you identify the positives and reframe your self-defeating statements.
5. Use activity to help you stay positive. Walk, run, swim, do volunteer work.

Powerful Beliefs

I can do it.
I can make a difference.
Change is normal.
There is always a solution.
I've succeeded in the past and I'll succeed now.
Things can always be improved.
There is always a better way.
I won't let a setback stop me.
This is an opportunity for me.
When I set my mind to it, I usually do well.
I expect to succeed.

**THE REAL ACT OF DISCOVERY CONSISTS
NOT IN FINDING NEW LANDS BUT IN SEEING
WITH NEW EYES. — MARCEL PROUST**

How Do You Feel About Yourself?

I felt really good when _____

I was most successful when _____

It made me feel good when someone told me that _____

The best thing that ever happened to me was _____

I was happiest when _____

The best period of my life was _____

What do you normally do when you are faced with a disappointment or failure?

How would you describe your approach? _____

What could you do to make your approach more positive? _____

What are some of the beliefs or statements that are getting in your way? Can you turn them into powerful beliefs?

For example: "I can't do this" becomes "I can always learn to do it," or "I've learned similar things."

**COURAGE IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF FEAR;
RATHER IT IS THE ABILITY TO TAKE ACTION IN
THE FACE OF FEAR. — NANCY ANDERSON, WORK WITH PASSION**

PART TWO: YOUR SUPPORT (THE CREW)

You are the person in charge of this expedition, but you still need a crew. An important part of managing a transition is getting support to help you move through it in a positive way.

People as Support

The techniques you use will depend on what kind of support system you already have. Few people are living in isolation; most make plans and decisions with the help of family members or close friends. Others build support through community resources and a wider network.

Information as Support

Information can provide support too. Knowing about the transition process, for example, helps you see the process as something normal and predictable. Information about the job market and about interview techniques can help you improve your own job search skills. Facts and figures can support a decision you are considering making or help you decide against it.

A TEAM APPROACH — THE RIPPLE EFFECT

You are not the only one going through your transition. Anyone close to you is going to feel like they are part of your transition process. The event that triggered the transition, whether it was voluntary or involuntary, creates an adjustment for everyone close to you. It is almost like the ripple effect when a stone is thrown into water. You, the person going through the transition itself, may have been preparing yourself for the change for some time. Other family members will likely only begin feeling the impact of the transition once it has really begun. A career transition impacts your personal life as much as your work life. Daily routines change. If you are not working, your role in the home and the community changes too. This obviously has an impact on your family and close friends.

It is important to maintain good communication with family members about:

- 1) *the transition process*
 - the ending and your feelings associated with it
 - the fact that there will probably be an “in-between” period or neutral zone before there is a new beginning
 - the fact that the process takes time

2) *how the ending will likely affect everyone*

- financially: budgeting, cost-saving, different ways to earn some income, changes in future plans, the need for relocation
- socially: relationships connected with work, changes in routine and roles
- psychologically: loss of control, lack of security, uncertainty about the present and future

3) *how everyone is feeling:*

- the feelings associated with change such as anger, resentment, discouragement
- setting some time aside to discuss feelings

The significant people in your life need to be included in any decision-making and planning you are doing. Planning together as a couple or family can ease some of the pressure of making a change. The decision to spend some time reflecting and researching options does not have to be on your shoulders alone. Perhaps you can exchange roles for a while or assist others in different ways.

Because the family goes through the transitions with you, they may not always be the best source of support. They may feel a loss of control, and may have many of the same fears as you. They are trying to take care of themselves and can't help you as much as they might like to.

GETTING SUPPORT

You have to identify the kind of support you need so you can decide where that support is available. Your spouse may be the perfect person to remind you of your past successes or sympathize with you, but may not be the best person to encourage you or help you make useful contacts. Remember that change can create pressure in relationships. Keep in mind too that groups of people, whom you can find through agencies and churches, are a good source of support.

Kinds of support:

- a mentor — someone who has experience and contacts in the work you are in or would like to be in
- a role model — someone you admire who handles situations or lives in a way you would like to
- a person with a good shoulder to cry on
- a person to give you advice
- a person to give you a kick to get moving
- a person who knows lots of people
- a person who has been through a transition similar to yours
- a person to give you financial advice
- a person to talk to (about whatever you want)
- a person who is a good listener
- a person with lots of ideas

Tips on asking for support

1. Asking for support is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign of confidence. To ask for support you often have to overcome a fear of being rejected. The risk is usually worth it. The wider your range of contacts, the better your resources will be.
2. It is important to be specific in what you are asking for. People cannot help if they are not sure what you want from them.

3. Ways to ask:

I'm trying to find out about _____ and I thought you would be a good person to ask because _____

I'm looking for ideas about _____

I'm interested in talking to someone who _____

I know you might be able to give me some advice / information about _____

4. Do not discount any wild ideas that come to your mind about people who might be able to help you. Promise yourself you will follow up on any lead. You never know where it will end!

Your Support Crew

Make a list in the first column of the kind of support you would like to have.

Then write in the second column the names of people you know who can provide that support.

If you can't think of anyone, try to think of how you could find someone. This might include the name of another person you know (networking), a group or association you could contact.

Kind of Support (What I Need)	Person I Know Already (write name)	How/Where to Find Person/People I Need

***I THINK LUCK IS THE SENSE TO RECOGNIZE AN
OPPORTUNITY AND THE ABILITY TO TAKE
ADVANTAGE OF IT. EVERYONE HAS BAD
BREAKS, BUT EVERYONE ALSO HAS
OPPORTUNITIES. — SAMUEL GOLDWYN***

GETTING INFORMATION

People are an important source of support but organizations and materials can also be helpful in doing research and reflecting on your future plans.

It is important to know what question you are asking. What is it you want to know? What do you hope to find out? If you can't get the information with your first question, try asking a slightly different question. Keep asking until you are satisfied that you have received the information you need or have been referred to someone else.

The Public Library is often a starting point for people in their search for information. Librarians are a very knowledgeable resource and can refer you to many places beyond the library itself.

Volunteering is another form of research. By putting yourself in different situations and using or developing different skills, you can determine directions in which you might like to move. Volunteering also gives you a chance to contribute to others, make contacts and establish new routines.

Government organizations offer free services useful to people going through transitions. Some of them are:

Alberta Career Development and Employment — career planning and job search workshops, publications, Labour Market Information Centres (libraries), career counselling and assistance with job search.

Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs — print materials, counselling, workshops on financial matters.

Alberta Economic Development and Trade — pamphlets and counselling on starting up a small business.

Canada Employment Centres — career planning and job search workshops, listings of job openings, employment counselling.

Chambers of Commerce — community information, future trends, business ideas.

Post-secondary educational institutions — information on full and part-time programs, libraries, free public events, counselling.

Others: churches, community groups, not-for-profit organizations such as the YWCA and YMCA. Many communities publish a directory of local organizations and services.

PART THREE: YOUR STRATEGIES (THE PADDLING)

You need excellent paddling skills to move through the waters of change. Once you are prepared and you have your crew organized, you are ready for the main part of the trip. An important part of Stage Two of the transition process (the Neutral Zone) is to take the time to think about your life and your work. This in-between time can be an opportunity to look back and analyze how you have made changes, taken risks and arrived at decisions. These strategies will help you refocus and give you increased strength to move on to Stage Three, New Beginnings.

TAKING STOCK

Taking stock means taking a good look at yourself. Perhaps you have changed, and the things that used to be important to you are less important now. Maybe your definition of success has changed because there has been a change of emphasis in your life. Or your priorities, values and interests have changed or are changing. For example, as people grow older they tend to be more concerned about the quality of their life, so their work and leisure priorities change.

Taking stock means looking back at your past and looking ahead to the future. Some of the questions you will answer in the next pages are: What have you done up to now? What do you wish you had done? How do you want to spend the next stage of your life? If you are in your mid-years, how do you want to spend the rest of your life?

These are big questions. The process of answering them can be overwhelming unless you take it step by step and spend some time on each question. Many people find it helpful to write down the answers. The exercises on the next pages will help you with this. They can also be helpful in preparing for job interviews where you have to promote your strengths and describe your past achievements and future goals.

**LIFE IS A SERIES OF COLLISIONS WITH THE
FUTURE, IT IS NOT A SUM OF WHAT WE HAVE
BEEN BUT WHAT WE YEARN TO BE. — JOSE ORTEGA Y GASSET**

Looking Back

What things have you done in your life that make you proud (your achievements or accomplishments)? Use a blank piece of paper to begin making a list of as many as you can think of. For example, finishing school, getting your first job, getting a promotion, having a child, winning an award. Don't overlook volunteer work, hobbies, leisure activities, education, family responsibilities.

What changes and choices have you made? Some of them may be related to your achievements. Others may be changes such as moving to a new city or neighbourhood, changing jobs, beginning or ending a relationship. You may want to include involuntary changes, such as a change in health, as well as voluntary ones. Write changes and choices on your sheet of paper.

Can you see any patterns or themes that repeat themselves in the frequency of the changes, the kinds of choices you have made, or the way you made the decisions? For example, do you get bored doing the same job after a certain period of time? Is there any similarity in the amount of risk you are usually willing to take? Is there a pattern in the way you respond to changes — by trying to avoid it or by looking on the bright side?

What are you good at (your strengths)? These may be things you can do (your skills) or the kind of person you are or your personal preferences. Look at each accomplishment and change you have identified and think of the strengths you used or developed around these events.

What recognition or compliments have you received? Who gave them to you? What nice things do people say about you or the things you do? These can help you identify strengths you may have overlooked.

Some examples of personal strengths or skills are:

flexibility	reliability
determination	honesty
liking a challenge	diplomacy
loyalty	creativity
independence	sense of humour

Some other skills are:

communicating	planning
organizing	designing
developing	following instructions
making	problem-solving
repairing	analyzing
writing	selling

Copy your lists of accomplishments, changes and compliments on to this page. List your strengths beside each one. You will probably begin to see some patterns.

Accomplishments/Achievements
(what you did)

Strengths
(what you are good at)

Changes/Choices

Strengths

Recognition/Compliments

Strengths

Looking Ahead

What is your idea of success? What would you like your future (next year, in the next five years) to be like? Your definition may include things like status, lifestyle, responsibility, income, values. Make sure it is your own personal definition and not somebody else's.

If you are a visual person, you may want to draw a picture or diagram to describe your idea of success. If you do not feel so creative, try putting your idea into words.

For me success is _____

What dreams do you have? If you could do anything, what would you do? Don't be afraid to write down even your wildest dreams. There is likely to be some link between your definition of success and the dreams you have for yourself.

My dream is to _____

What are your needs? What do you think you need in terms of income, lifestyle, location? How strong are these needs?

I need _____

**MY ADVICE IS TO LIVE YOUR LIFE.
ALLOW THAT WONDERFUL INNER INTELLIGENCE TO
SPEAK THROUGH YOU ... FOLLOW YOUR
BLISS AND BE WHAT YOU WANT TO BE.
DON'T CLIMB THE LADDER OF SUCCESS
ONLY TO FIND IT'S LEANING AGAINST THE
WRONG WALL. — BERNIE SIEGAL**

ASSESSING LIFESTYLE NEEDS

Restoring the Balance

Balance is necessary to keep you afloat on the water. Without it, you will tip, fall in and run the risk of drowning. It is easy to get carried away working or studying and to forget the value of leading a balanced or harmonious life. An unbalanced life leads to stress, fatigue, illness and burnout.

A period of transition can be an opportunity to re-evaluate your priorities and re-establish a balance. Everyone's idea of a balanced life is different, so you need to focus on your own needs and preferences. It is important to take time to do this while you are still in a period of transition and change. This break in your routine gives you an opportunity to achieve a better balance.

Here are some of the questions you will want to think about.

How do you want to spend your time?

What will give you enjoyment and peace of mind?

What kind of relationships, personal and work, do you want to have?

How much time do you want to spend on them?

What do you need to do to keep healthy — physically and spiritually?

What income do you need to be free from financial worries?

What does your picture of success include, beyond work?

Another way to approach it is to identify situations and activities that give you energy or drain your energy. You may even be able to identify types of people that affect your energy.

What things give you energy? I get energy from _____

What things drain your energy? My energy is drained by _____

What things are you doing at the present time to give balance and energy to your life?

What is missing? _____

I can establish balance in my life by doing the following:

If you are used to working and do not have a job right now, you need to find other opportunities that will provide the challenges, social contact and routine of paid work. For many people volunteer work and expanded family roles meet some of these needs. This is a good time to do some networking, talking to people about the kind of work you can do or would like to do. You may decide to take a part-time course or work on improving your fitness.

It is a good idea to set some goals for yourself in the various parts of your life such as relationships, physical and spiritual activities (things that give you energy). As long as the goals are meaningful to you, it does not matter how large or small they are. Set a time limit for yourself to accomplish each goal.

My goals

I'll do it by:

Don't be too hard on yourself if you don't meet your time limits. It is important to focus on the things you have done and to reward yourself for doing them. A reward could be something like going out for coffee, reading a good book, spending a morning in bed, buying a lottery ticket — whatever you really like and don't always allow yourself to do.

I'll reward myself by: _____

FRUSTRATION IS THE MOTHER OF RISK. —

GAIL SHEEHY

**AND THE TROUBLE IS, IF YOU DON'T RISK ANY -
THING, YOU RISK EVEN MORE. — ERICA JONG**

RISK-TAKING

You can't escape from taking risks in life. In order to learn and develop as a person, you have to push yourself beyond what is most comfortable for you and try new things. Even by not doing something, as Erica Jong says above, you are taking the risk of missing out, of staying put while everything around you changes.

There are different kinds of risks you can take:

- 1) physical risks — climbing a tall tree, trying skydiving, firefighting
- 2) emotional risks — expressing feelings such as love, anger to another person, committing yourself in relationships
- 3) financial risks — buying lottery tickets, investing in a business, buying property, quitting a job

In a period of transition, as you explore your options and think about career moves, you may be dealing with all three kinds of risks. By asking for support during a transition, by admitting you could use some help, you may be taking an emotional risk. By starting your own business or by resigning from a job, you may be taking a financial risk. Decisions about your health or the types of work in which you might be interested could involve physical risks.

We all approach risk differently. What is risky for one person may not be risky for another. You may think nothing of buying lottery tickets or investing in a home but find it hard to make a commitment to a personal relationship. Traditionally, because of the way boys and girls have been socialized, many men find it easier to take physical and financial risks while women are generally more willing to express their feelings and take emotional risks.

Fears are often what hold us back from taking risks. (Look back at Overcoming Fears on page 11). We fear the consequences of taking action. Studies tell us that among men and women who start small businesses, women usually do more research and often begin by working out of their homes and then gradually expand.

There is no such thing as a sure risk. By gathering as much information and support as possible before taking the risk, you build a safety net for yourself and decrease the amount of risk involved.

Tips on Risk-taking:

1. Never risk more than you are willing to lose. Any risk can result in a loss. Be sure you realize the consequences of any risk you are considering.
2. Reduce the amount of risk and the chance of loss by doing research, building support, and getting as much control as possible over the outcome.

3. Practise with small risks and build up your confidence. For example, save the most important telephone call until you have successfully completed less important ones.
4. Try some new ways of doing things. Break the old rules. Talk to people you don't know. Go places you have never been before — a different store, a different church, a new route downtown. Changes in your habits and routines can add creativity and excitement to your life.
5. Keep track of the risks you take, the new things you try. Write them down. They can give you renewed confidence and a more positive attitude about yourself.
6. Try to see risks that fail as temporary setbacks and opportunities to learn.

What kind of a risk-taker are you?

If you were canoeing and you came to some whitewater, would you think of how you could avoid it or would you look forward to the challenge of going through it?

If you were on a high diving board and got scared, which would be riskier for you, to climb back down or to jump off?

Past Risks

Think of two risks you have successfully taken.

Risk #1:


Risk #2

Now answer these questions about the risks.

How did you approach each risk?

What exactly was risky about it?

What did you do to lessen the risk?



Did you think about the consequences of failing? Did you ask yourself “What is the worst that could happen if I do this?” “What could go wrong?”

Did you think about the consequences of not taking the risk?

An Immediate Risk

Now identify a risk you are considering taking.

The risk is:

What could go wrong? What are the chances of that happening?

How can you lessen the risk?

If you do not take this risk, what would you lose?

Can the risk be broken down into steps, so that you can take smaller risks and so not risk as much?

After some consideration, you may decide that the risk is too great and not continue any further. It is important to know your limits.

DECISION-MAKING

Making a decision can be very hard. Sometimes it is tempting to avoid making a decision by continuing to do more and more research. If this is the case, you need to stop and analyze what is holding you back. Reasons why you may avoid making a decision include: fear of missing out on a better opportunity, fear of making a bad decision. (You may want to refer back to the previous section on Risk-taking or page 11 Overcoming Fears.) Leaving your options open by not deciding could mean you are passing up good opportunities. Deciding not to decide is in itself a decision.

The first step in making a decision is to identify your goal. What is it you want to decide about? One decision usually consists of a number of smaller decisions. For example, if you are going on a trip, first you make a decision about the destination and then you have to make other decisions about your route, your means of transportation and how long you will take.

Are you the kind of person who makes plans carefully or are you more impulsive?

Planned Decision-making:

1. Set the goal or end decision.
2. Identify the alternatives.
3. Collect information about each alternative and identify the pros and cons (advantages & disadvantages).
4. Weigh the pros (positives) and cons (negatives). You may want to do this on a piece of paper to figure out what is most important and least important to you. Some people rate each item (*, **, ***) to analyze the importance. As long as even one "con" is stronger in importance than the "pros," it will be difficult to commit yourself to the plan. For example, if one of your "cons" is "having to move to another city" and you give it the strongest importance (***), it may not matter what the "pros" are.
5. Choose the best alternative.
6. Review your process and the choice.
7. Plan how to carry out the decision.

Impulsive Decision-making

1. Make the choice.
2. Put your choice into action.

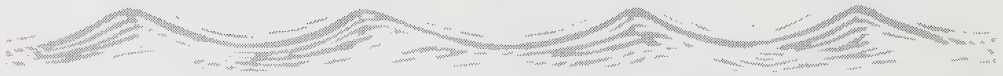
Intuitive Decision-making

You may follow steps 1 – 3 of Planned Decision-making, but rather than weigh the pros and cons (or in addition to doing so), observe your instincts or inner feelings. Sleep on it. See how the decision feels if you decide one thing or the other. The right decision will “feel right.”

Decisions you have made in the past

You have obviously made many good decisions that brought about changes in your life.

Identify three or four successful decisions you have made. Write one decision at the top of each wave. Then below the wave write what type of decision-making style you used.



You will probably see that you use different decision-making styles for different kinds of decisions.

To help you further analyze your decision-making, finish these statements:

A decision that I made impulsively was:

A decision I let others make for me was:

A decision I made using my intuition was:

A decision I made in a carefully planned way was:

A decision I need to make is:

Which of your decision-making styles does this kind of decision fit best with?

No matter which decision-making style you use, it is still helpful to take a look at how you describe the decision. Is it really one decision? What is the central decision you are trying to make? Try to break it down into a series of smaller decisions.

For example: "A decision I need to make is if I should go back to school." Before making that one big decision, it would probably help to narrow it down a bit. This could be done by deciding on a number of other things: what course(s) you might take, what the options are (part-time, full-time, distance education, continuing education), how the course(s) would help you, entrance requirements, costs.

Once you are clear about what decisions you need to make, it will be easier for you to make them. You will need an action plan to help you carry out the decisions. This will be covered in the next section.

**NO TRUMPETS SOUND WHEN THE
IMPORTANT DECISIONS OF OUR LIFE ARE
MADE. DESTINY IS MADE KNOWN SILENTLY.
— AGNES DE MILLE**

EVEN IF YOU'RE ON THE RIGHT TRACK,
YOU'LL GET RUN OVER IF YOU JUST SIT THERE.
— WILL ROGERS

PART FOUR: YOUR ACTION PLAN (THE MAP)

A successful expedition requires a map. You may know your destination but you also need to know how to get there. By making a decision you have taken the first step in setting a goal or destination for yourself. This is a sign that you are moving through the transition process and are ready to create a new beginning for yourself.

Sometimes your decision and your goal will be the same. For example, your decision might be to move to Vancouver. Your goal then becomes to move to Vancouver. Your action plan will consist of all the steps you must take in order to make the move a successful one. Another decision might be to go back to school and get further training. Your immediate goal might be to get accepted into a particular program. Once again your action plan will consist of a number of steps.

Whatever goal you identify, the next step is to figure out how you are going to reach that goal. An action plan is a series of steps to reach a goal. This section will help you with: developing an action plan, recovering from a mistake if you make a wrong decision and preparing yourself for future changes.

DEVELOPING A PLAN

The ideal action plan will be broken down into steps that can be taken in a logical sequence. It is better to identify as many steps as possible. That way you will feel a sense of accomplishment as you complete them.

As you identify the steps, pause and ask yourself "What might prevent me from accomplishing this step?" Think about the things that could get in the way and try to identify ways to overcome them. Many of the techniques you have worked through in the rest of this book will help you in your action planning. Use your support network to help you identify the steps you need to take. Be alert to people who are not supportive as they may want to sabotage your efforts.

You may also sabotage yourself if you are not really ready to carry out your plan. Perhaps you are still in the Ending Stage of your transition and your feelings of anger and discouragement prevent you from positive action. If this is the case, you will need to spend more time on developing powerful beliefs by re-framing those self-defeating thoughts (see Re-framing in Part One on page 13).

Part of your action plan can be to explore some other areas. Your decision may have been to do some career exploration by finding out what areas you could move into. It's okay to set tentative goals for yourself and then change them as you see that they are not realistic or appropriate for you.

In Part One you learned about re-framing. You can do something similar to the way you present yourself. You may have always attached a particular label to yourself. For example, if people ask you "What do you do?," you are used to answering, "I'm a teacher" or "I'm a mechanic." If you no longer wear that label or do not want to use it anymore, it can be a real challenge to figure out how to identify yourself. This calls for re-packaging.

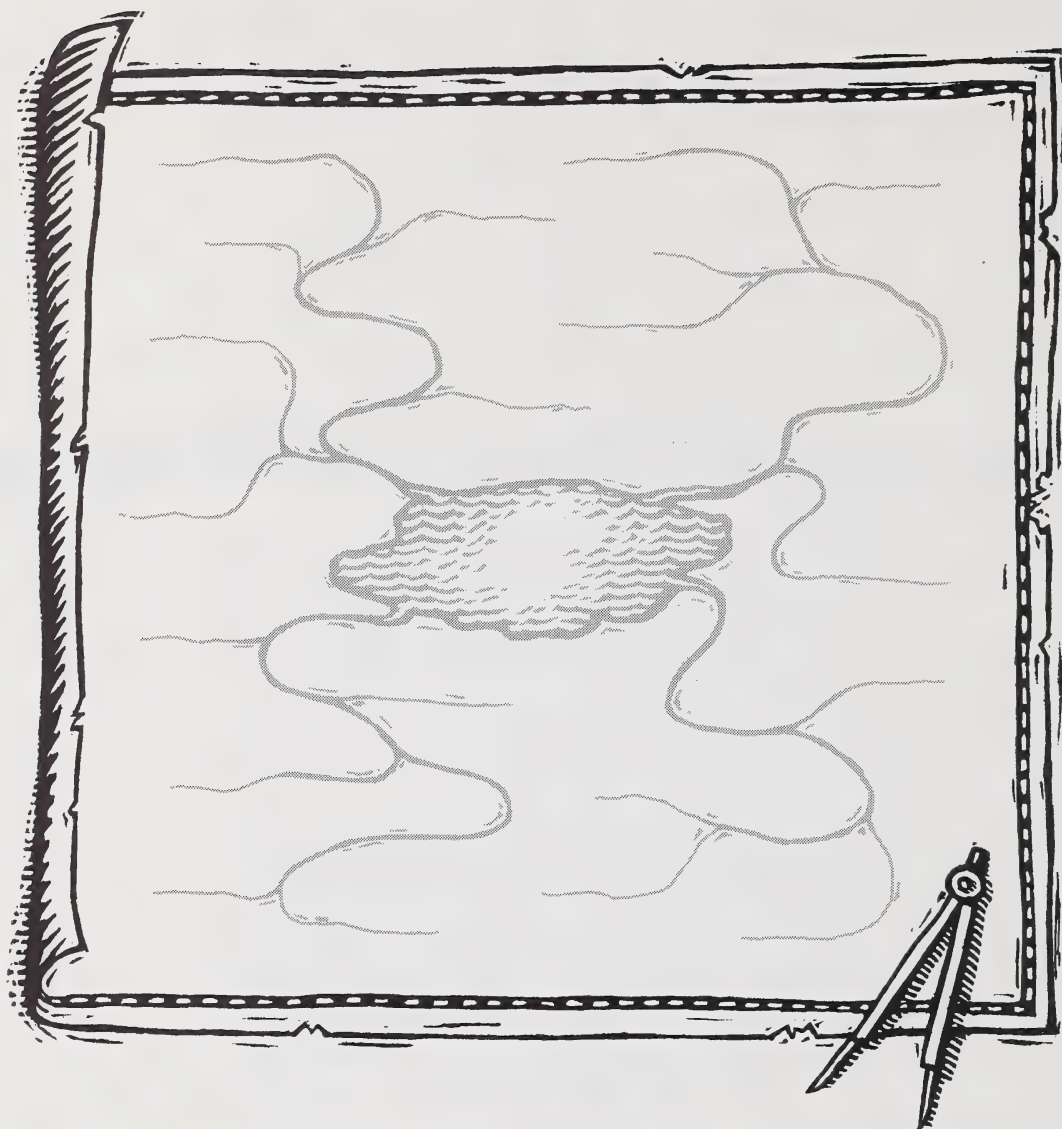
Think back to the stock-taking you did in Part Three (page 21). There are many other ways you can describe yourself using the skills and interests you have. A teacher is a person with the skills to train and teach, to communicate, to motivate others. A mechanic has problem-solving and analytical skills in addition to technical ones. Your action plan could include steps to re-package your past experience and skills in order to look for work in a different area. Another possible step would be to take a "dry run" by testing out your interest in a field through doing volunteer work, taking a course or trying a new hobby.

When you are making a plan, it is a good idea to have a back-up plan — a plan B. You probably already do it more often than you think. For example, if you are planning a picnic outside, you will often consider what you will do if it rains. The picnic is plan A and the bad weather alternative is plan B. If you do not get accepted by a school or college to which you apply, do you have another idea of what to do? If you have a job at present, have you ever thought about what you would do if you lost that job? You could be working on preparing yourself for that possibility, just in case. Thinking about a back-up plan in advance can make your recovery from a disappointment or change in plans easier.

Mapping out your plan

This map of your action plan will resemble a lake and the streams running into it.

Write your goal in the centre of the page. Then fill in all the steps you can think of in the branches. At this point do not worry about the order in which you will do the steps. Don't limit your imagination. You can always eliminate steps afterwards. Try to break down each large step into smaller ones. The smaller they are, the easier they will be to achieve.



FAILURE IS WHAT YOU MAKE OF IT. WHY NOT
MAKE IT THE CORNERSTONE OF YOUR NEXT SUCCESS.

— SOURCE UNKNOWN

EACH PATH IS ONLY ONE OF A MILLION
PATHS. THEREFORE YOU MUST ALWAYS KEEP
IN MIND THAT A PATH IS ONLY A PATH. IF YOU
FEEL THAT YOU MUST NOT FOLLOW IT, YOU
NEED NOT STAY WITH IT UNDER ANY
CIRCUMSTANCES. ANY PATH IS ONLY A PATH.
THERE IS NO AFFRONT TO YOURSELF OR
OTHERS IN DROPPING IT IF THAT IS WHAT
YOUR HEART TELLS YOU TO DO.

— CARLOS CASTENADA

RECOVERING FROM A MISTAKE

It is impossible to go through life without making mistakes. Mistakes are lessons we can learn from. Think about a mistake you made recently. Do you see it now as a failure or a learning experience?

Re-framing the experience in positive terms (see page 13) can help you get over feeling bad about it. Then you will be ready to move on. Remember that behaving in the same way again will not necessarily bring about the same results. It is important to try again. There is always going to be some risk involved. Once you feel you have made a mistake, you often would like to stay away from things where success is not guaranteed. This can make you very cautious.

Think of people who have been laid off from a company in financial trouble. They may blame themselves for ever accepting a job there. They may say that this time they will only take a job with a company that has an excellent financial record. But how can they really be sure? There is still an element of risk involved, even if they do a lot of research on the company's record.

Steps for recovering:

1. Try to be rational in analyzing why the mistake happened.
2. Think about what you lost and what you gained by making this mistake.

3. Ask yourself what you can learn from the experience.
4. Identify things you usually do to deal with disappointment. How helpful are they? You may want to try something new.

Some ways are:

- A) physical, such as going for a long walk or run
 - B) emotional, such as crying or yelling
 - C) intellectual, such as talking it over with friends, making notes, keeping a journal
5. Be good to yourself. Give yourself a treat or a break.

PART FIVE: THE NEXT TIME AROUND (FUTURE EXPEDITIONS)

An expedition through the choppy waters of change teaches you many things that will be useful in the future. As the paddler, you will remember the experience and the things you learned for a long time. You will know you have reached the end of your transition period when you can look back and see the experience as being positive, an “opportunity” to change. You can only do this if you feel there have been more gains than losses.

The days of being guaranteed secure jobs for life are over. Whether you like it or not, you will need to learn to tolerate more uncertainty. Just because you have made it through one transition does not mean you can sit back and forget about change. Your increased ability to handle change will continue to be useful to you. For one thing it makes you realize that it is important to keep on learning and to be open to new ideas and new ways of doing things.

Tips for Keeping Prepared

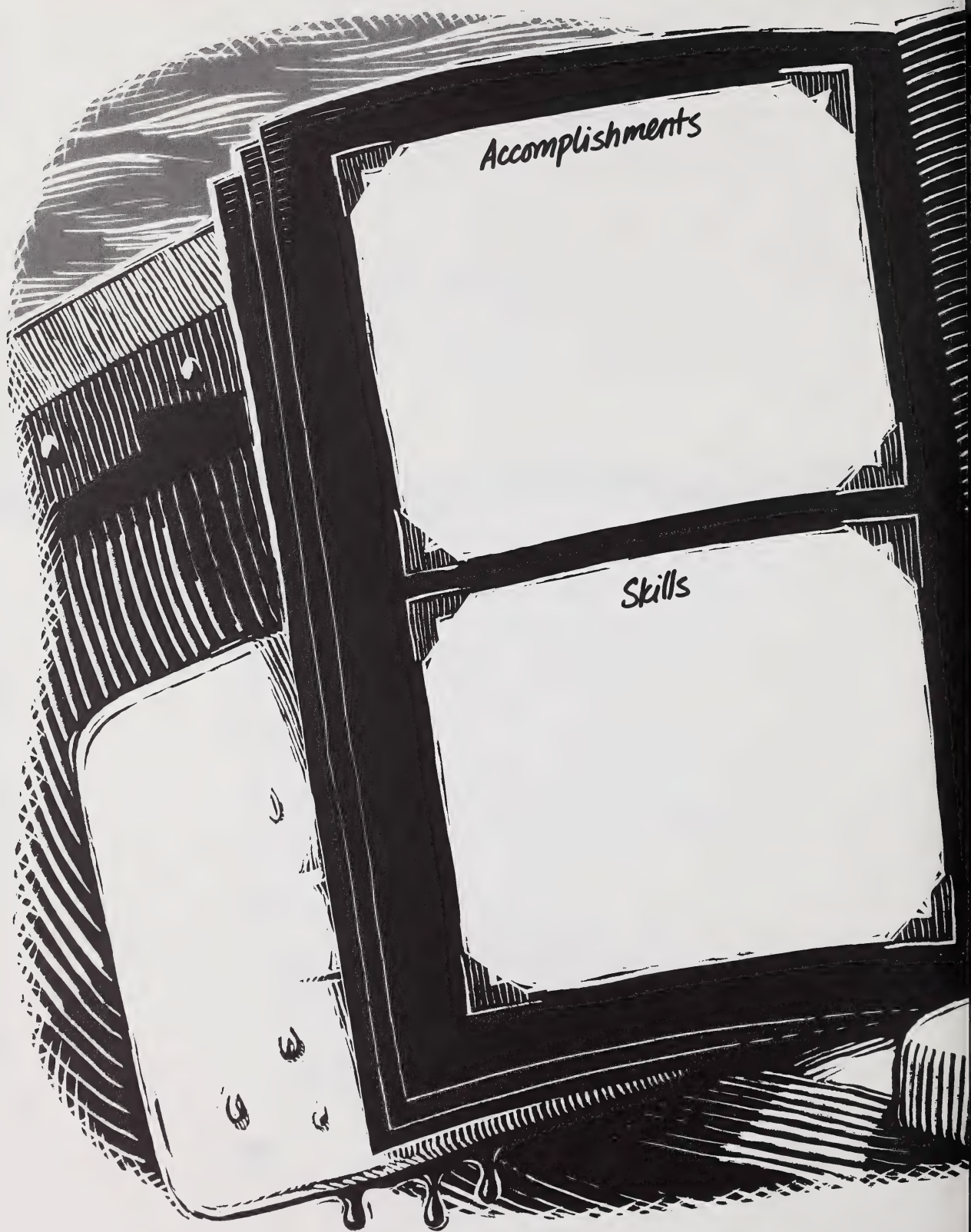
1. If you are in a new job, do not give up your networking. Let the people who were supportive of you know where you are. Keep in touch and make new contacts in an informal way through coffee breaks, meetings and on your own personal time.
2. New work or volunteer responsibilities will help you add to your collection of skills. They will also help your self-confidence.

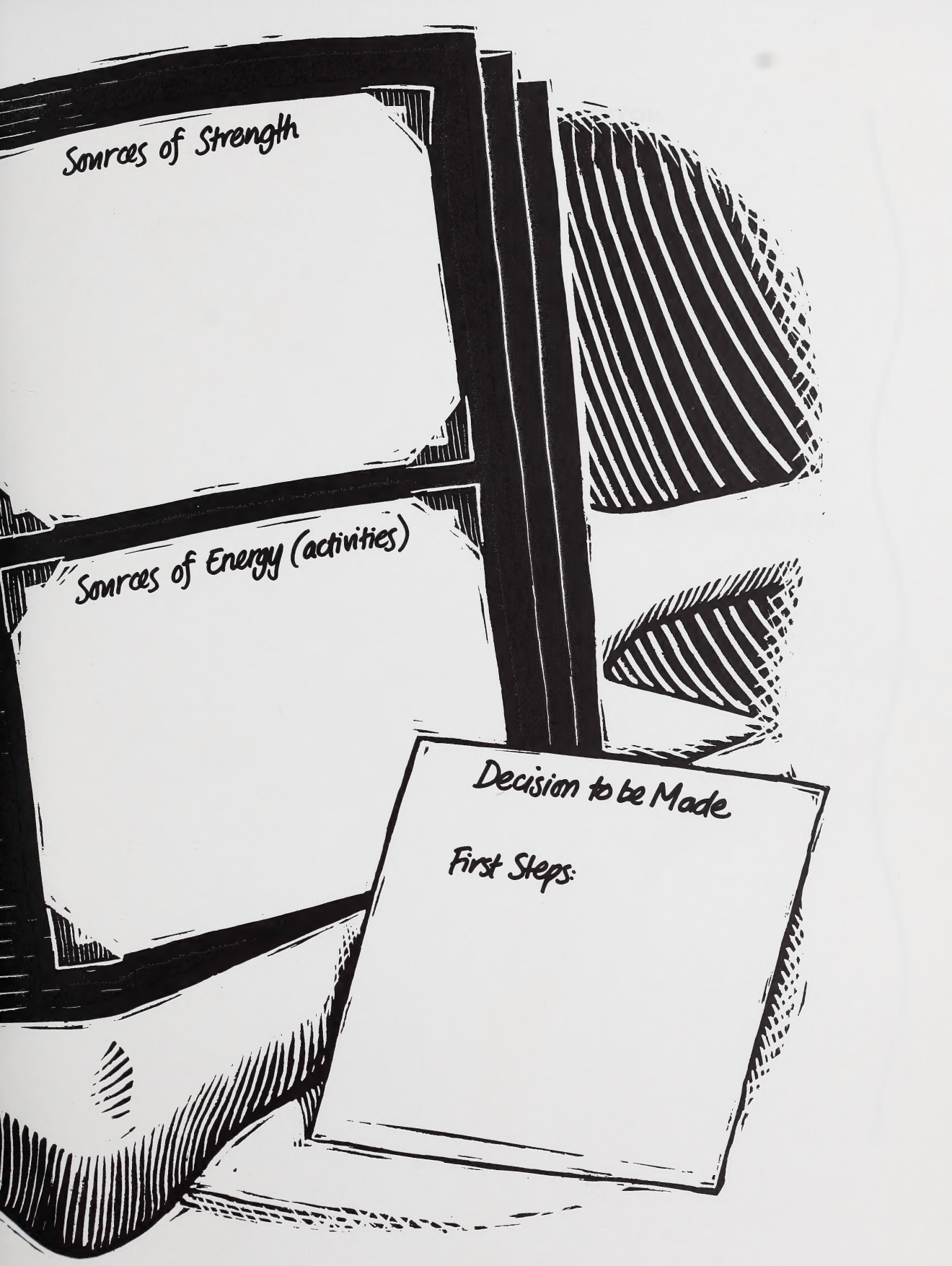
3. Think positively of change. Learn to think of challenges as opportunities and mistakes as learning experiences. Don't assume things will always stay the same.
4. If you feel yourself getting stuck or burned out in a situation, create change for yourself. By taking control of things yourself, you will feel more positive and be more productive. The change does not need to be enormous. It can range from something like a change of routine or work responsibilities to a change of location or a career change.

Congratulations! You have now successfully navigated this expedition through the whitewater of change. As the paddler, you have developed your crew of supporters and strengthened your paddling skills to take informed risks and make successful decisions. Your ability to develop an action planning map and to learn from your mistakes will help you on future expeditions. Use the chart on the next page to pull together everything you have learned on this trip. Bon voyage!

**MINDS ARE LIKE PARACHUTES, THEY ONLY
FUNCTION WHEN OPEN. — LORD DEWAR**

A RECORD OF YOUR TRAVELS





Sources of Strength

Sources of Energy (activities)

Decision to be Made

First Steps:

NOTES:

